

THE CENTRAL AMERICAN RIDDLE

Continued from page 4

A Million People

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the rebelling party sends its "Minister" to Washington. He is not recognized by this government; but is generally received in an informal way so that he may tell his story to the Department of State.

Then, if the fortunes of war take another turn, and a few weeks of uncertainty ensue, with the regular government and the revolutionists equally matched, the department may treat the Ministers of both parties merely as "agents." Later, if the revolutionists conquer, the regular Minister is no longer recognized and the agent of the rebels steps into the diplomatic circle in our capital. While all this is going on, there are many times when some foreign country, thinking its citizens are being persecuted as a result of the revolution, is urging the United States to intervene and establish peace in the unquiet country. And these pleas are supplemented by urgent demands for help from American citizens whose property and lives are put in peril.

BUT, says the average citizen, why should we bother about Central America? Why would it not be the best plan to let those Republics fight among themselves?

In the first place, there is the question of humanity, the very thing that caused American intervention in Cuba. In the second place, few Americans realize that down there in the jungles and under the mountains lies untold wealth. The riches attract both the attention and the cupidity of the rest of the world—a cupidity that would have long since resulted in the thorough development of those countries but for the frightening fact that neither money nor life was safe under present conditions. There are in Central America minerals of many sorts,—gold, silver, platinum, and copper,—large deposits of salt, and marvelous growths of cabinet and dye woods, not to mention the possibilities for fertile plantations of every product known to the luxuriant tropics. But the greater part of them has been untouched by the hand of man.

Tegucigalpa, capital of Honduras, a city that figures frequently in newspaper despatches, is one hundred miles from a port, and has no railroad communication with the port or any other place. Thousands of square miles in Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala is virgin land which awaits the development that will take from it millions upon millions of dollars.

But no land can be developed without railroads, and capital does not build railroads in countries where bands of marauders are apt to burn the bridges and cut the telegraph wires two or three times a year. Moreover, as a rule in these days, where there are no railroads there is little money. The son of a former President of one of these Republics told a friend of his not long ago that he owned forty thousand acres of splendid land, and yet, if he had one hundred dollars in his pocket or in his bank at one time, he felt remarkably rich.

Figure this out a moment: Central America boasts only one twenty-fifth as much ex-

ports to the square mile as Cuba—and Cuba is still far from being developed. In Guatemala, the worst governed, men are conscripted into the army, paid between three and four cents a day, and compelled to subsist themselves out of that sum. Salvador, the smallest of them all, is the redeeming feature in this dark picture. She is so densely populated that, if the United States had a population as thick as hers to the square mile, we should have in our borders seven hundred and fifteen millions of people. In 1910 she imported articles worth nearly four million dollars, and she exported more than seven million dollars. And yet her tremendous mineral wealth is to this day comparatively untouched. She has an area of seventy-two hundred square miles, but her miles of railway number only one hundred and seventy, this means of transportation being supplemented by two thousand miles of good cartroads.

If this is true of the richest of the Republics, how much vaster are the opportunities among her sisters. Mining engineers, plantation promoters, and capitalists of every kind have brought back to this country fairylike stories of the fabulous wealth locked up in those troubled lands. And Uncle Sam's diplomats realize today to the utmost that upon this government devolves the duty of throwing open to the markets of the world such opportunities for wealth and of bringing to the oppressed people more civilization and enlightenment of the healing streams of trade.

STRANGELY as it may seem, Americans are the most bitterly hated people in Central America. The power that has preserved them for a century from subjugation by foreign countries enjoys their most vindictive dislike. The citizen of the United States is hated by the politician because in him the politician recognizes a representative of the power that in the end will destroy opportunities for unrest and revolution. And we are hated by the masses of the people because the masses follow the dictates of the politician. Also it must be admitted that Central America has been treated to a sight of some objectionable Americans, because conditions there have been such as to attract the lawless and many of the adventurous spirits of this country. Nevertheless, this is but an incident in the situation.

In the face of all this, the State Department knows that stable governments in Central America will mean that American money and American people will go into the small Republics. All our public lands are practically taken up. Our farmers are going in large numbers to Canada. Where will the next step in the search for wealth be? Under ordinary conditions, the answer would be Central America. And this is the great riddle that confronts Uncle Sam: To insure the citizen who goes there the protection of his life and property.

How can this be done? There lies the riddle, the problem of how to make life and property safe in a territory situated at our doors.

TEACHING THE YOUNG IDEA

BY ANNA BIRD STEWART

IT is said that the only State where no attempt is made to teach the young idea how to shoot is Kentucky. The aim there, on the contrary, is to teach him not to.

In spite of the spread of education, the poor teacher gets little sympathy. She is underpaid and overworked. Her real reward comes in her success in helping those willing to learn. If she is conscientious, her failures will weigh her down. If she has a sense of humor, these failures will be the second bright spot in a daily routine of deadly dullness.

After wading through forty papers in which paucity of idea and originality of spelling are thinly hidden behind a disguise of illegibility, think of the joy a humorist can feel in a criticism so full of the unusual as this:

"The country, fine food, library, advantage to go off to college, drunk, education and disappointment's these are the things what makes Poes work so sad."

Perhaps too the poorly trained teacher never knew that, "Thomas Jefferson wrote about the Seval war." Education in the old days, you may remember, was vastly different. Then we were content with reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic; now we have all modern improvements, including nature study and basketry.

Our children nowadays are too busy being entertained to bother about elementary subjects, and the teachers are so intent upon following the rules to develop the child's intelligence that so trivial a matter as correct information is overlooked. When President Hadley of Yale once asked a small boy in the graded school of Bridgeport who Esau was, the lad gave him this astonishing reply:

"Esau was the author of a book of fables, and he sold the copyright for a bottle of potash."

ANSWERS to oral questions are funny enough; but the cream of school absurdity comes in the papers handed in to poor "Teacher."

"Milton's style," wrote one aspiring youth, "don't whole the attention. He used metafiers sparingly. But his subjects for simulars [similes] is derived from mitology, bible and natur."

It was a much wiser pupil, one who had evidently gone to the root of the matter, who declared:

"Milton wrote about devils and some heathen goddesses. He did not write about love in his poetry because he was three times married."

"Horce in his ILLIADD," announces an ambitious student of the classics, "begins in